

~~TOP SECRET UMBRA~~

**The Way It Used To Be
or
From ADVA/GENS to the Alphabet (Part II)**

(b) (3) - P.L. 86-36

In an earlier paper, I recalled some of my experiences in the Air Force Security Service in the early 1950s. I returned in graduate school, and the GI Bill provided just the bare necessities of life, and I had just discovered that my job at the university, working on a Russian language machine translation project, meant that I could not work on my thesis during the summer quarter. At this important juncture, the campus was visited by both CIA and NSA recruiters. Both made offers, and I really had a difficult time deciding which to take. Finally, I decided on NSA because I had some idea of what I would be doing with the Agency, while CIA was so vague and mysterious with their offer, I had no idea what I would be doing.

What a pity CIA could not have been more specific – it might have been fun.

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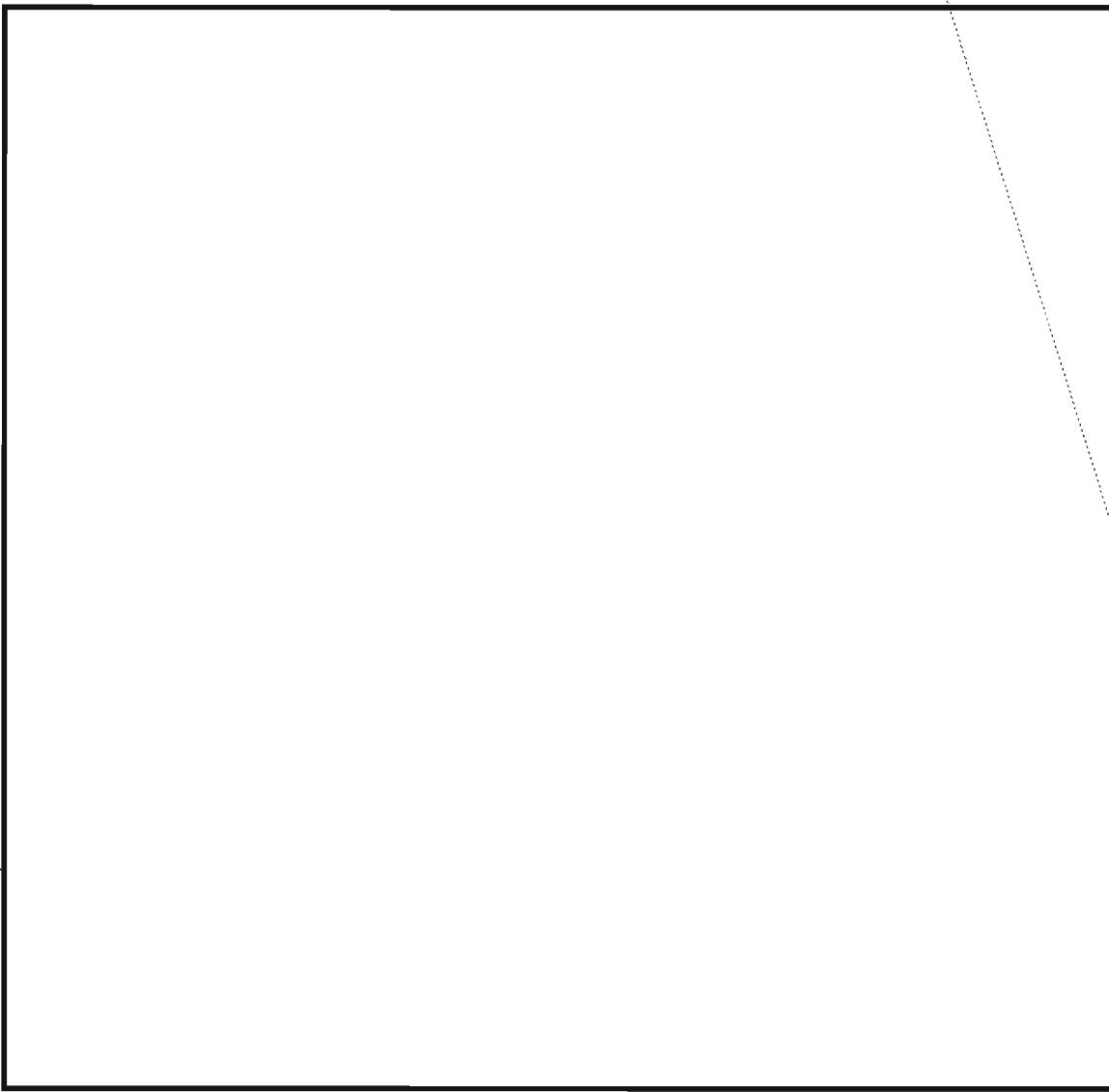
In late June 1957, I reported to Arlington Hall Station and began processing and training for a job in either ADVA or GENS as a linguist or an intelligence research analyst (foreign language). Finally, it was decided that I would join ADVA-111 as an intelligence research analyst. First, though, I went over to the NSA Training Facility - Tempo X - by the Washington Armory to take a class on radio printers. Upon completion of the class, I returned to Arlington Hall, the former girls' school, and began my on-the-job training in earnest. Since the move to the new building was planned for the fall and there was no employee parking available anyway, we new employees couldn't get parking permits. Another new employee and I formed a car pool and made the happy discovery that there was plenty of free parking at an adjacent Episcopal church. The only problem was making the left turn into the parking lot during the morning rush hour, but this was easily solved by waving to oncoming motorists who were always willing to let the two vicars make the turn. Although this parking lot was only a short distance from the Arlington Hall main gate, no one else from NSA ever used it.

Arlington Hall Station consisted of two main operations buildings, A and B, dating back to World War II and, of course, lacking air conditioning. As the summer wore on and both temperature and humidity rose to higher and higher levels, we were visited by the man with the thermometer and the hygrometer, who would test the area and get a measurement of the heat and humidity. If both reached some magic mark in the nineties, work stopped and we were sent home early. It reached that point only a very few times that summer, but when it did we were ready to leave since everyone wore suits and ties back then and would be wringing wet.

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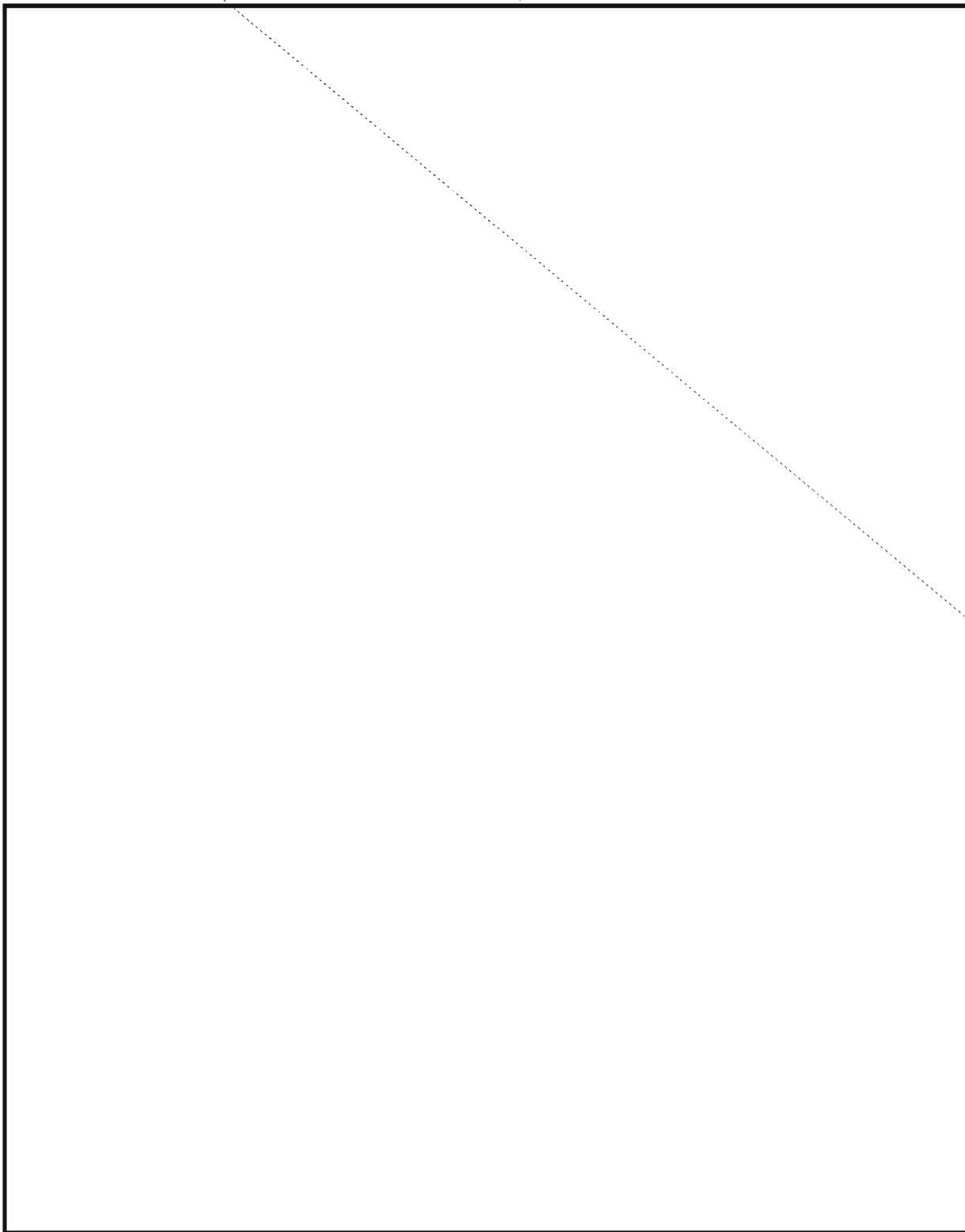
In October 1957, ADVA moved to Fort Meade, and we were soon established on the third floor of the Operations Building. [redacted] was the chief of ADVA, and [redacted] [redacted] was the chief of ADVA-1. NSA was a much smaller organization in 1957, and it was not unusual for Dr. Sinkov, Frank Rowlett, [redacted] or other high-ranking personages to stop by analysts' desks and ask what they were doing. As I recall, there were only three GS-18s in all of NSA in 1957. Fort Meade was quite an improvement over the World War II era offices at Arlington Hall Station. The basement at Fort Meade was filled with computers, but for all their size and complexity they were pretty small potatoes to what we have today. Probably most amazing of all was the parking, acres of available spaces everywhere, even if people arrived late.

(b) (3)-P.L. 86-36

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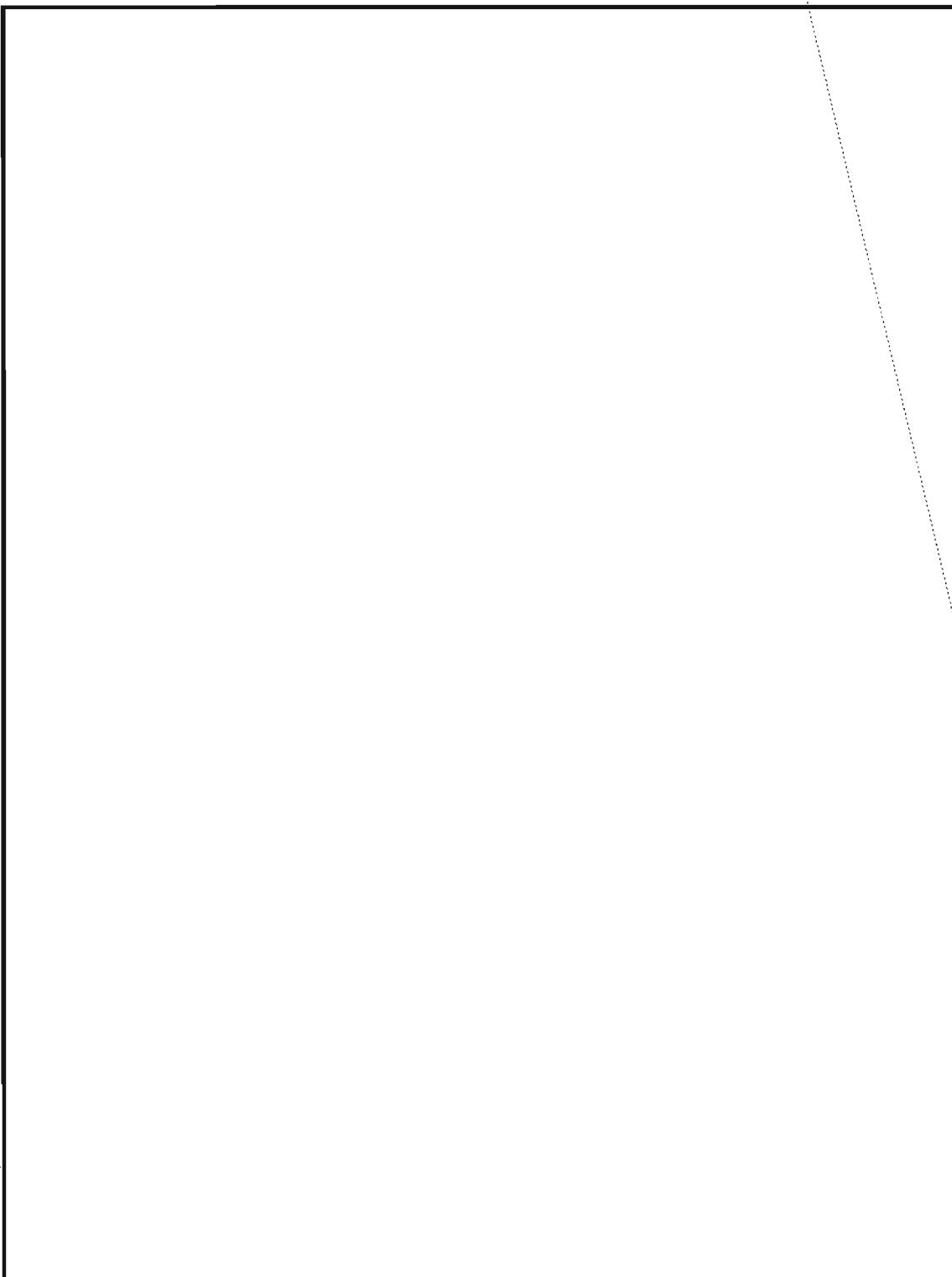
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Finally, in 1965, after eight years with ADVA and its successors, I was offered a job in the new A Group SIGINT Warning Center, and I just couldn't resist taking it. NSA was not an around-the-clock operation until 1976. There used to be a PROD Watch Officer and an assistant who would come in and man the phones at night. The PROD Watch was armed with the appropriate phone numbers and would call people in if necessary. When the Cuban Missile Crisis occurred in 1962, [redacted] came back from a meeting, gathered a group of us together and told us to come back in to work at 11 P.M. He told us to listen to the TV that night and we would know the reason we had to come back. I reported back to work that night and found myself working for an up-and-coming young manager named Walt Deeley. We had a most interesting time during the crisis. That first night we were all assigned specific duties except for one extremely well-dressed young man who was a stranger to all of us. He sat off by himself and proceeded to read the *New York Times* all night. Someone said that he must be the CIA liaison with us, and Walt bought that explanation. About 6 A.M. an announcement was made that the cafeteria was ready to serve breakfast. The young man immediately asked Walt if he could go to breakfast; Walt said to go ahead but then asked the fellow what exactly his job was at CIA. "CIA? I'm not from CIA. I'm your courier to the Pentagon," was the response. Needless to say, Walt exploded, and from that point on the young man was a part of the team and was kept busy each night.

(b) (3) -P.L. 86-36

[redacted] We started a daily publication during the crisis which later became SIGINT Daily Summary. I went home the morning the crisis ended with the feeling of both accomplishment and relief.

(b) (3) -P.L. 86-36

The SIGINT Warning Center was on the second floor of the Operations Building just [redacted] was the chief of the Center, and we worked directly for the A05, Walt Deeley. [redacted] was the chief of A Group at the time, and he showed a great deal of interest in the Warning Center. We had two people who manned the Center around the clock and who had OPSCOM connectivity with some counterpart organizations which were coming into existence then. It must be remembered that the secure phone system as we know it did not exist then, and we relied almost exclusively on the OPSCOM to conduct exchanges outside of the Washington area. A secure phone call to an overseas location was just out of the question back then. Each one of us in the Warning Center was responsible for a certain area of expertise. My areas were

[redacted] The Warning Center was quite small and consisted of very few people considering the relatively large areas of responsibility covered.

[redacted] a secretary, our watchstanders, and I. Our main concern was to insure that A Group collection and reporting activities were aware of

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(b) (3) -50 USC 403
(b) (3) -18 USC 798
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(b) (3) -50 USC 403

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ongoing threats and were able to issue appropriate SIGINT Alerts as necessary. We briefed Walt Deeley daily and [redacted] almost as much on what was happening in the Soviet world. Since many other events could have an impact on the status [redacted]

[redacted] incident.

[redacted] and, of course, the Tonkin Gulf

(b) (3)-P.L. 86-36

Marty Sullivan left for the NSA Europe Intelligence Support Staff in Paris as deputy chief, and I was to join him there as chief of the Intelligence Support Staff Watch in 1966. Marty was replaced by [redacted] as chief of the Warning Center, and when he departed for the NOG in Hawaii, he was replaced by [redacted] as chief. Tom had one of the best methods of discouraging people from eating the goodies he had on his desk that I have ever seen. The cleaning crew that came through each night used to raid his dish of candy with great regularity, so Tom replaced the candy with chocolate covered ants. The next morning they were gone, so Tom refilled the dish and made sure that the original container was plainly visible on his desk. The following morning the ants were untouched, and when he started filling his dish with candy again it was left alone. Walt Deeley encouraged all of us to take overseas tours. Gene McAllister, [redacted] and I took him at his word and soon left the Warning Center. I arrived at Headquarters NSA Europe in Paris in June 1966 and was among the last to leave for Stuttgart in April 1967 when General De Gaulle threw the Americans out of France. But that's another story....

[Ed. note: Since writing this article, [redacted] has retired.]

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